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ABSTRACT

As part of a sabbatical leave for professional development, a faculty member from Missouri's St. Louis Community College (SLCC) undertook a survey to determine principles and instructional practices in community college writing programs. A literature review was conducted of theories related to writing instruction. In addition, questionnaires were sent to department chairs or writing program coordinators at 45 public community colleges having a student population of at least 5,000, site visits were conducted at 2 colleges similar to SLCC, and 2 national writing conferences were attended. The questionnaire sought information on the purposes, administration, and instructional practices of respondents' writing programs. Study findings, based on responses from 23 program administrators, included the following: (1) the most commonly cited purposes were to help students use writing for lifelong learning and prepare students for employment, cited by 10 respondents each, and develop students' basic writing skills, cited by 7 respondents; (2) respondents indicated that adjuncts taught fully 69% of the composition courses; (3) 61% of faculty were assigned five courses per term, while average class sizes were 27 for composition courses and 22 for basic writing courses; and (4) the most frequently used instructional methods were in-class workshops, conferences, collaborative learning, in-class writing, peer tutoring, and computer-assisted instruction. Contains 43 references. The survey instrument and a list of participants are appended. (HAA)

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CURRENT CURRICULAR PRINCIPLES AND INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES' WRITING PROGRAMS

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April 1997

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AN ABSTRACT:

CURRENT CURRICULAR PRINCIPLES AND INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES'S WRITING PROGRAMS

This study examines current curricular principles and instructional practices in community colleges's writing programs. Following the introductory remarks on the report's purposes, this project presents some major composition theorists' theoretical stances that inform writing programs' purposes, administration, and pedagogical practices. The report next analyzes the responses to the questionnaire. The report concludes with supplementary materials that include: a sample questionnaire and reminder, graphic display of exemplary writing programs, and a list of works cited.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is a great pleasure to acknowledge those who have helped to shape my sabbatical leave final report. For her diligence in designing and producing the survey's mailing labels and reminders, I thank Judy Hefele, English Department, St. Louis Community College at Forest Park. For his willingness to talk with me at length about my sabbatical report, especially the questionnaire, with candor, respect, precision, wit, and intelligence, I would like to thank Dr. Steve Fulbright, English Department, St. Louis Community College at Florissant valley. His comments were instrumental in sharpening my focus and in helping me think through writing programs' issues more expansively than I might have done.

For the originality of their thinking and the importance of their insights in responding to the survey's questions, I would like to thank the following persons: Bruce Aaron, Des Moines Area Community College; Marianne Adam, Oakland Community College; Hope Burwell, Kirkwood Community College; Ellie Bunting, Edison Community College; Mary Ruth Donnelly, Belleville Area College; Jack Dodds, William Rainey Harper College; Elaine M. Good, Nassau Community College; Margaret Hanks, Glendale Community College; Sandra S. Hanson, La Guardia Community College; John Hardway, Phoenix College; Ruth Hatcher, Washtenaw Community College; Margaret Hughes, Butte College; Jack Janss, Citrus Community College; Bill Lamb, Johnson County Community College; Jonathan Launt, Central Piedmont Community College; J. Labriola, Sinclair Community College; Frank Madden, SUNY Westchester Community College; Jack Lee Powell, Lane Community College; Howard Rudrow, Brookdale Community College; Alexander Russell, Community College of Philadelphia; Jack Scanlon, Triton Community College; Marc Schwertley, Malcolm X College; Beckey Stamm, Columbus State Community College.

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CHAPTER 1:

PURPOSE OF SABBATICAL LEAVE REPORT

Our college system offers the general aim of a sabbatical leave as the awarding of "opportunities for individual professional development, retraining, growth, and/or education if such leave activities will benefit the college and serve to revitalize the individual"(*Article XXIII– Paid Leaves of Absence)* . Based on my understanding of that definition, I examined current principles and instructional practices in some community colleges' writing programs.*

To fulfill that general purpose, I surveyed 23 public community colleges with a student population of at least 5,000. Also, I visited two community colleges that are similar in demographics to our campus. I attended two national writing conferences. I presented a brief, graphic overview of "exemplary" community colleges' writing programs.* When these sabbatical leave activities are carefully examined, we will conclude that they will benefit the college, and they have revitalized the recipient.

**According to Professor Raines, "the term 'writing program' does not evoke a precise image of what we do. . . . Most community college teachers consider themselves practitioners. . . . As such, we have different operative contexts . . . from freshman English programs or composition studies in universities. In two-year colleges, writing traditionally is the center of undergraduate English or language program. . . . Furthermore, we do not teach writing as an emphasis for a degree. . . . In fact, two-year colleges . . . infrequently have separate writing programs ("Is There a Writing Program...." 152).*

Specifically, the questionnaire's responses, my visits to Malcolm X and Johnson County Community Colleges, and my participation in two national composition conferences have provided invaluable data that clarify and reaffirm common curricular principles and pedagogical practices in our writing programs. From these experiences, we can extrapolate the relevant strategies which can be experimented with and/or implemented in our developmental and transfer-level composition courses. I hope that this report will motivate us to engage in continuous reflection of our current pedagogical methods and make the decision regarding what techniques need to be modified, retained, discarded, and added. If this self-reflection is ongoing, our chances of addressing and achieving our departmental, divisional, campus, and district-wide objectives ,that are stated in my sabbatical leave proposal on students' success would have been ameliorated.

Thus, in response to my sabbatical proposal's question **"What are the curricular principles and instructional practices that inform community colleges' writing programs,"** I have included the following data in my final report:

1. A brief comprehensive review of the current, recurring research-based theories that inform writing programs
2. An analysis of the data collection techniques on writing programs
3. Supplementary materials on writing programs, including: a brief overview of "exemplary" writing programs, a sample questionnaire and reminder, and a list of works cited.

CHAPTER II:

BACKGROUND: CURRENT THEORIES THAT SHAPE OUR WRITING PROGRAMS

INTRODUCTION

What is the relationship between theory and practice? Why is it necessary to understand the assumptions or principles that mold our writing programs' purposes, administration, and pedagogical practices? According to Lindemann, if we

> command a sufficiently broad theoretical understanding of our work, we can apply our knowledge to new contexts and avoid wasting time in hit-and-miss experimentation. . . . That is, we would be able to diagnose a writing problem and help our students overcome it. (10)

Therefore, our understanding of our discipline is not simply a matter of expertise in the subject matter. It entails much more, if our primary objective is to give our students "enough guided practice in composing that they become more fluent, effective writers at the end of the semester than they were at the beginning" (Lindemann 237). The research suggests the need for both: we need to be experts in our discipline and in the assumptions that underlie our pedagogical practices. When we are experts in both, we can easily diagnose our students' writing strengths and weaknesses; thus, we are able to provide them with the assistance they need. From these experiences, we can design writing programs that benefit our students.

However, research suggests that "although some writing programs have been modified and expanded, most have not 'established' new initiatives and do not expect to undergo any great changes" (Hartzog 60). For example, Raines's study highlights our unwillingness

to restructure writing programs and to allow composition theory to inform our instruction. This attitude, she argues, "can be a limitation for both the faculty and the program"("Teaching English ....." 34). If some of us are resistant to changes, how accountable are we? If we are easily intimidated by movers and shakers, how accountable are we? What happens to students who are unable to succeed because we divert our instructional aims by waging political wars against those who propose changes in our writing programs?

Cognizant of how students learn to write, composition theorists provide us with avenues for understanding how practice tests and modifies theory. Theorists seem to address these recurring concerns. Are we putting into programmatic practice what we have learned about composition theory, or are we simply guided by intuition? Do we really understand why some students experience difficulty with a specific task and others do not? Whatever our responses, some of us believe that our writing programs cannot survive if they have no clear-cut principles that inform the writing program's purposes, administration, and pedagogical practices (Miller 6-l0).

Many of us have drawn from the research of respected composition theorists, such as **Nancy Sommers, Kenneth Bruffee, Mina Shaughnessy, James Moffett, and Peter Elbow.** They exemplify a national community of scholars, who are knowledgeable about the interrelationship among research, theories, and classroom practices. We are often motivated to adapt their "theoretical stances," a position that Peter Elbow promotes. He argues that we need to be cognizant of the basic principles that mold our teaching practices, identifying and questioning them in light of other assumptions and in light of our

experiences as teachers of writing. Thus, we need to take an active role in shaping and reshaping the theories that undergird our daily instructional practices (What is English? 49-66).

But knowledge of basic assumptions about changes and developments in composition research and instruction does not suggest that writing instruction can only be done one way. Odell succinctly addresses this concern when he states,

> The goal is to try to contribute to an ongoing dialogue . . . in which an increased awareness of our basic assumptions leads us to rethink our practice as teachers . . . and, at the same time, our practice serves as a way to test and modify those assumptions. (Theory and Practice .... 5-6)

This background section, therefore, provides us with the "theoretical stances" of major composition theorists that influence our writing programs. In reviewing their assumptions about how students learn to write, we are invited to engage in ongoing dialogues for rethinking the curricular implications of their theoretical stances.

Nancy Sommers's Theoretical Stance

Nancy Sommers's research helps us redefine rewriting to include both revising and editing. For example, when students refine their written texts by correcting errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation, they are editing, not revising their texts. Also, when students make textual changes in organization, coherence, development, and audience's needs, they are revising, not editing their written drafts.

Sommers describes revision as a "cyclical process that occurs throughout the writing" ("The Need for Theory....."48). As students draft their texts, they redefine their purpose and audience; they reshape their discourse; they realign their text to reflect public linguistic

conventions. But confusion results when inexperienced writers do not know the differences between revising and editing. Thus, according to Sommers, inexperienced writers view revision as a rewording process, seeing it as a "thesaurus philosophy of writing. . . . [Those] students consider the thesaurus a harvest of lexical substitutions and believe that most problems in their essays can be solved by rewording" ("Revision Strategies . . . . " 381).

Sommers encourages us to guide our students' practice with rewriting by providing thoughtful commentaries and not appropriating students' written texts. In responding to students' texts, Sommers advises us to offer facilitative comments that are text-specific and are accompanied by strategies for revising ("Responding to Student Writing" 150). She further explains that without thoughtful comments "from their teachers or their peers, student writers assume that their written texts have communicated their meaning and perceive no need for revising the substance of the text" ("Revision Strategies...."378-379). Additionally, Sommers cautions us about comments on student's early drafts. She suggests that we should "offer students revision tasks of a different order of complexity and sophistication"("Responding to Students' Writing" 151). That is, in the early drafts, Sommers advises us to make comments that "engage students with the issues they are considering and help them clarify their purposes and reasons in writing their specific texts"(151).

Perhaps, Sommers's most influential instructional strategy on revision is her admonition of our "appropriation" of students' written texts. She contends that we

"appropriate" students' texts when we focus on "accidents of discourse"(usage, diction, grammar) in the early drafts and ask students to correct those errors when they revise their texts. She believes that the preoccupation with sentence-level problems in the early drafts "create the concern that these errors need to be attended to before the meaning of the text is attended to" (150). For example, when we write marginal and interlinear comments on students' early drafts, we force the students to see their discourse as a series of parts -- words, sentences, paragraphs -- and not as a whole discourse. Besides, Sommers contends that this approach leads students to view their early drafts as finished products, not as invention drafts, and that all they need to do is patch and polish their writing. She advises us to mark only one draft, the final product, with the expectation that the students will write better next time(149-151).

Thus, Sommers's clarification of rewriting as a "cyclical process" helps us in our responses to students' written texts. We are reminded to avoid editing comments on early drafts, to make text-specific revision comments on early drafts, and to use facilitative comments that create the motive for students' revision of their written discourse.

Kenneth Bruffee's Theoretical Stance

Believing that knowledge is a "collaborative artifact" that results from "intellectual negotiations," Kenneth Brufee explores the curricular implications of knowledge collaboratively generated in our writing programs ("Liberal Education....." 103+). Rather than keeping students dependent on us as the primary authority on their written texts, Bruffee advocates **collaborative learning**, thus advancing it as a productive

instructional mode in our writing programs.

To Bruffee, academic writing becomes the product of socialization within a community. If students are to succeed, he argues, they should practice the conventions of this academic community by applying them in their evaluation of their written texts and those of their classmates. Bruffee points out that "we can think because we can talk, and we think in ways we learned to talk"("Collaborative Learning....."640).

Because our thoughts are internalized speech, writing, then, becomes a re-externalization of this internal conversation. For example, students may work jointly on a research project, may engage in peer response on exchanged papers, and may participate in small-group discussions with its need for collaboration and intellectual sharing. Assuming the role of facilitator, the guide, the synthesizer, we can assist our students in learning how to work with others, how to tolerate diverse opinions, and how to think critically as they make decisions about the written texts. Our students' successes, Bruffee explains, are dependent on the opportunities that "represent as nearly as possible the collective judgment and labor of the group as a whole" (A Short Writing Course 45).

Furthermore, Bruffee believes that the "purpose of collaborative learning is to help students gain authority over their knowledge and gain independence in using it"(49). In the classroom, for instance, we "create social structures in which students learn to take over the authority for learning as they gain the ability to do so"(49). Thus, if we believe in knowledge as a social construct, then collaborative learning may become an important means of promoting our students' success in our writing programs.

Certainly, Kenneth Bruffee offers writing programs an alternative that helps students excel in our writing courses. Collaborative learning, when used appropriately, can help our students "through the exercise of intellect, . . . to sharpen and sensitize their inner eyesight"("Liberal Education....." 98).

Mina Shaughnessy's Theoretical Stance

In developmental writing courses, Mina Shaughnessy's explanation of the cognitive constraints that challenge developing writers informs our instructional practices. Two of the greatest curricular benefits are her expositions about the basic writer's linguistic structure and her definition of the "basic writer."

Shaughnessy advises us to determine and understand the cognitive constraints that delimit basic writers' linguistic structure. Having minimal writing experiences, these writers' command of sentence structure is marginal because they are unable to match their writing process with their thought process. Thus, their writing errors reveal performance mistakes, not conceptual failures.

Despite the muddled prose and unconventional syntax that characterize their writing, Shaughnessy believes that these basic writers are invaluable resources to any writing program. In her estimation,

> from these students we have also begun to learn much about learning and teaching. Capable because of their maturity of observing the processes they are going through as learners, they can alert us easily and swiftly to the effects of instruction. They work, in this sense, collaboratively with the teachers in ways that are impossible with child learners. In a hurry, also, to learn what we have to teach them, they press us to discover the most efficient ways of presenting what we would have them understand. The

> result will be, in time, not so much a simplified view of written English as a more profound grasp of what lies below the prescriptive bits and pieces of instruction we once called English composition. (291-292)

Having a strong respect for these students and endorsing a high level of interaction for these developing writers, Shaughnessy provides us with invaluable information that influences our instructional practices.

Furthermore, Shaughnessy urges us to rethink our definition of a "basic Writer." She thinks that the cultural and linguistically diverse populations within one institution or one classroom influence that definition. Monolithic students do not exist in a writing classroom, she states. Bringing into the classroom their own individual discourse patterns, they reflect the linguistic structures of their own discourse communities. Therefore, Shaughnessy encourages us to model for these basic writers the processes of writing, revising, and editing. She further indicates that the errors in these students' texts provide opportunities for instruction, for guiding student writers in the rewriting of their writer-based prose as reader-based prose. Such practice is essential because, according to Shaughnessy, many inexperienced writers assume "the reader understands what is going on in the writers' mind and needs therefore no introduction or transitions or explorations"(240).

In short, Mina Shaughnessy urges us to use our current classroom experiences in exploring and discovering instructional methods that promote students' success. We can achieve that objective if we have a high level of commitment: a willingness to reflect on our observations, to question our assumptions about our writing instruction, and to experiment with new possibilities that may suggest alternative pedagogical approaches.

James Moffet Theoretical Stance

Using Jean Piaget's principles of cognitive development, James Moffett offers us a student-centered, process-oriented writing curriculum. For him, effective writing entails the writers' ability to "manipulate" a symbol system when communicating with others. Because inexperienced writers, in his estimation, offer encounter an "imbalance in knowledge," Moffett urges us to design writing programs that address students' needs (Teaching the Universe of Discourse viii). Translating his theory into practice, Moffett provides us with specific instructional strategies on audience awareness and sequenced assignments.

Moffett believes that the ways of addressing audiences are connected with the writers' cognitive growth from egocentrism (writer-based prose) to public writing (reader-based prose). In his estimation, an egocentric text is marked by narration. Thus, the writer may fail to fulfill the readers' needs; therefore, this text reflects a writer-based discourse. Also, in this egocentric text, the writers illustrate an "imbalance of knowledge" because of their inability to manipulate symbols to communicate clearly with an audience. That is, the writers are unable to balance the demands of composing because they have not learned how to juggle complex cognitive constraints.

To maintain a "balance in knowledge," Moffett advises us to sequence our writing assignments. He believes that writers can only master a complex task after they have learned a simpler one because each assignment builds on the previous one and leads to the next one. Assignments reflecting varying levels of complexity will allow writers to move from "self to world, . . . from a private world of egocentric chatter to a public universe of

discourse," Moffet stresses (246). As students write progressively more abstract discourse, they learn to move from first-person observations to third-person discussions.

Thus, James Moffett urges all teachers who teach writing to help their students develop appropriate voices and rhetorical stances for a variety of readers. Also, by designing a writing curriculum with a spiral of assignments that require progressively complex cognitive processes and more distant audiences, students will be able to meet the increasing demands of their assigned writing tasks.

Peter Elbow's Theoretical Stance

Peter Elbow's research offers invaluable insights into a student-centered writing curriculum. He counsels us to provide the most conducive learning environment for our students. To do so, he encourages us to engage in frequent re-examination of our instructional practices, trying to determine the theoretical assumptions that inform our teaching of writing.

That reflection, he stresses, may reaffirm our commitment to our teaching practices or motivate us to consider alternative approaches that foster students' learning. This open-minded dialogue, Elbow exclaims,"usually depends on respecting and trusting practice for a while and afterward interrogating it as a rich source for new theory"(What Is English 87). That is, we can best serve our students when we have a "rhetorical stance," trying to

understand the theoretical assumptions implicit in our own pedagogical practices. Elbow translates this "rhetorical stance" into practical, collaborative learning classroom-based strategies, such as: small group discussion, joint writing projects, peer review, peer tutoring, and writing-across-the-curriculum.

In order to engage students in their own learning, Peter Elbow believes that there must be a "redistribution of power arrangements between teachers and students" (Writing Without Teachers 125). That is, we should initially provide students with a risk-free way of getting their thoughts on a page without having to worry about "correctness" (2). Proposing freewriting as an initial drafting step, Elbow offers these suggestions:

- Writers should concentrate on writing, taking no time to worry about what others might think of their early drafts. When writers struggle to keep words flowing, they overload their "academic superego," with sentence-level issues of correctness that can become writing blocks.
- Writers should share the responsibility for their own learning. For example, they seek out peer responders to their written texts and the texts of others. When writers collaborate with others, they assume the role of readers and become more actively involved in the process of monitoring and assessing written texts. They have to come to their own decisions as to what is and is not working in their texts; they have to figure out for themselves what they need to do next. Thus, in the process of learning how to respond to their peers' texts, they develop the ability to respond to their own texts.

- When students become collaborators of written texts, the teachers become facilitators, guides, and coaches. No longer the "gatekeeper" of discourse, the teachers assume the role of ally . Elbow advises us to assess students on their best work, to give feedback on texts which students can revise before a grade is given,to use competence-based evaluation criteria, and to avoid evaluating an initial or "zero" draft because it is "an unnecessary burden to think of words and also worry at the same time whether they are the right words" (5-15).

The pedagogical implications of Elbow's theoretical stance helps us understand the necessity for shared responsibility between teachers and students within the classroom. When students actively participate in their own learning, we enable them to experience, create, and develop the ability to evaluate their own and their peers' written discourse.

Conclusion

The recurring advise of these theorists infers that writing programs should aim for curricular reform. That is, in the design of writing programs, we should assist our students in developing their own voices, and in understanding the values, discourses, and institutional practices that influence their academic accomplishments. They advocate cooperative classrooms that recognize and respect diversity, that place the student at the center, that give students claims of ownership over their written texts, and that place the teachers in a facilitative, coaching, guiding role. Thus, teachers and students participate in cooperative inquiry that enables them to negotiate and respect differences. Bruffee summarizes the varying theoretical stances very well when he states,

> Teachers have to be able to translate at the community boundaries between academic or professional knowledge communities that they belong to and uncountable numbers of non-academic, non-professional communities that their students belong to. That is, they have to be able to translate the languages of academics and professionals into the languages of people who are not yet members of any academic or professional community, but who aspire to become members. (Collaborative Learning 64-65)

CHAPTER III: DATA COLLECTION ANALYSIS

Survey of Selected Public Community Colleges

Introduction

This section describes the results of a questionnaire (See Appendix B) that was mailed to 45 public community colleges' department chairs or coordinators of writing programs.* Forty-five questionnaires were mailed; 23 responses were received. When a reminder (See Appendix B.) was sent, ll colleges indicated that they had returned their completed questionnaires. Unfortunately, I did not receive them. Therefore, the **real** response rate is approximately 5l%.

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* *The term "writing program" refers to developmental and transfer-level composition offered by these colleges. No attempt is made to use the term in the same context as a senior college or university because community colleges dot not have planned degreed writing programs. Additionally, faculty who teach composition courses may also teach reading, literature, and humanities courses.*

Although the survey's sample of community colleges is small, it does provide a fairly accurate representation of writing programs throughout the United States. In order to ensure this representational sample of community colleges, with a student population of at least 5,000, the AACJC 1996 Membership Directory was used for the random selection of the colleges (See list of participating colleges in Appendix C.).

The questionnaire addresses three specific aspects of the 23 colleges' writing programs:

1. Purposes
2. Administration
3. Instructional Practices.

Purposes of Writing Programs

The objectives that English departments set for writing courses -- basic and transfer-level composition courses -- "shape the operative context of a [writing] program" (Raines, "Is There a Writing Program.....?" 155). Some of the commonly articulated objectives are providing general education requirements, using writing for lifelong learning, serving other courses and programs, preparing for employment, and developing basic writing skills. Of the stated purposes, the one that recurs in the community colleges' responses is a service-skill emphasis that "prepares students to write for other courses and/or for transfer degree programs"(Raines, "Teaching English," 31). This service -skill approach to writing is supported by some of the respondents; others overwhelming view writing as a mode of learning (See Table 1 on page 17a.) That is, the majority indicates that the most important

Table 1: Most Important Purpose of Writing Programs
by
Number of Times Mentioned

Purposes	Number
Provides students with general education requirements	6
Helps students to use writing for lifelong learning	10
Prepares students for other college courses	6
Prepares students for transfer to senior colleges	6
Prepares students for employment	10
Develops students' basic writing skills	7
Other (Please explain.)	1

purposes of their writing programs are to help students use writing for lifelong learning (l0), and to prepare them for employment (10). The service-skill orientation, however, is present because the writing programs' most important purpose of six colleges is the preparation for other college courses.

However, the research suggests that a service-skills orientation in writing courses fosters these erroneous assumptions:

- Writing instruction does not require specific expertise in the theory and practices of writing; therefore, anyone can teach writing.
- College freshmen have already attained a level of competence by the time they enroll in college-level writing courses; therefore, only a one- or a two-semester sequence of writing courses is needed.
- Both the writing process and academic discourse conventions are homogeneous enough that they can be taught in a combined manner within one semester (Foster 8-l5).

These faulty assumptions do undergird some of our writing programs. For example, we may offer two levels of composition courses within the same semester to the same enrollees. That is, one-half the semester may be devoted to the first level and the second half to the next level. Another illustration entails the organization of some of our writing courses. In most developmental writing courses, we begin with sentence-and-word level work and move to paragraph development. Research claims that these two methods are counterproductive and not shaped by composition research and theory. Therefore, we are cautioned not to "begin our teaching of writing by discussing grammar and punctuation.

We can't require oral writers to switch to a written grammar while they are still writing oral transcriptions"(Clelland 2). Clelland, however, does offer suggestions for effective teaching that is informed by composition research and theory. He recommends,

> We must first immerse students in writing in a recursive process of drafting and revising and acting not as correctors, but as readers, showing them real readers' needs. Only then is the writer prepared to see the difference between an oral grammar and a written grammar as part of the larger strategy of elaboration and precision which writing imposes. (2)

Administration of Writing Programs

How are community colleges' writing programs administered? Does the administration reflect significant changes that are informed by current composition research? The responses to these questions may be determined from my analysis of the surveyed community colleges' writing programs. Information was gathered on factors that greatly influence writing programs, such as: staffing, teaching load, educational requirements, teaching experience, faculty's average age, class size, faculty academic rank, and faculty retirement eligibility within ten years.

Although the surveyed community colleges reflect the diversity of their constituents, their writing programs' administration is markedly similar. For example, their faculty are usually experienced practitioners with more training in literature than in the teaching of writing. Additionally, they usually teach five to six English courses, including writing and literature, each term with a standard class size of 25 to 30 students.

Traditionally, the writing program is housed in the English department and chaired by a full-time faculty with released time. Because the structure of college divisions vary, the

coordinator of the writing program may not necessarily be an English faculty . For example, the chair could be a reading practitioner whose academic area is a part of the English department. Therefore, the responses indicate that 43% of the writing programs are coordinated by a chair, 36% by a program director, and 21% by others, including committees, associate deans, and lead teachers (See Figure 1 on page 20a.) Additional comments that describe how the writing programs are directed entails:

- "No one directs the program. The department chair, who may be a foreign language professor and whose academic area is a part of the English department, schedules classes."
- "The Writing Department is separate from the Literature Department."
- "A Committee of composition specialists direct the writing program."
- "The associate dean of the division directs the writing program."

In response to the staffing of the writing program, respondents indicate that adjuncts teach most (69%) of the composition courses (See Figure 2 on page 20b.). The staffing of composition courses with adjuncts is of great concern to many educators. Mahoney and Jimenz claim that part-time faculty comprise 66% of all community colleges faculty (58-61). Also, Raines reports that "the overall average percentage of part-time [English] faculty per institution is 42 percent"("Is There a Writing Program.....?" 15). Although the staffing consists of students (5%), administrators (2%), and paraprofessionals (1%), full-time faculty only comprise 23%.

Eleven percent of the full-time faculty who teach composition courses do not have

Figure 1: Coordination of Writing Programs

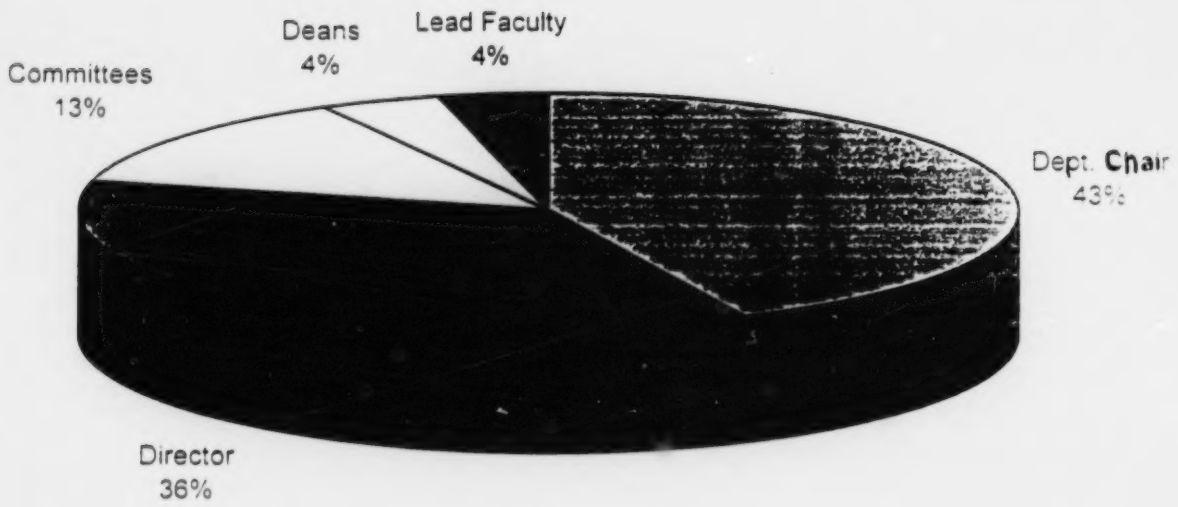
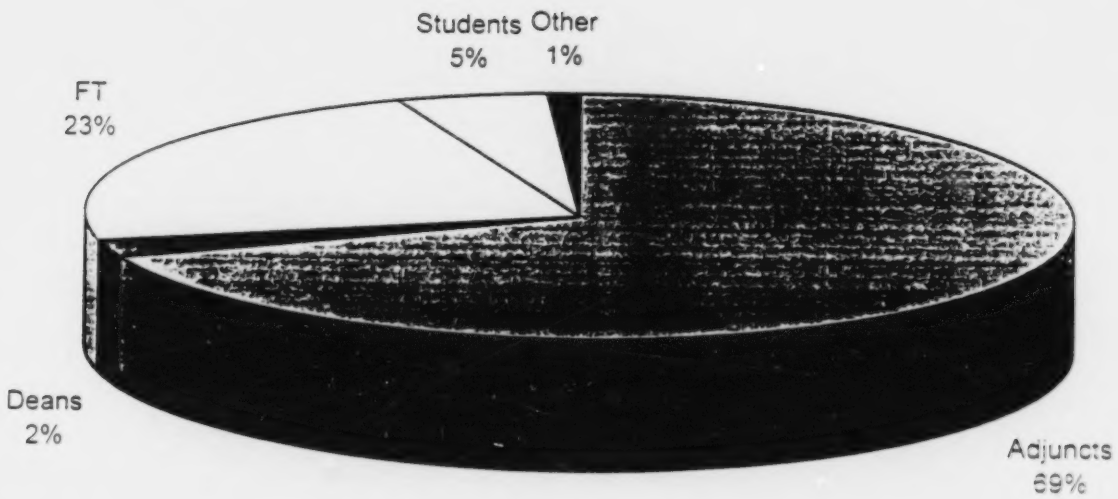


Figure 2: Staffing of Writing Programs



varying academic ranks (See Figure 3 on page 21a).Some comments regarding academic ranks include:

* "All faculty are instructors."
* "We do not rank our faculty."
* "Our institution does not subscribe to ranking systems."

Those who use academic ranks record the following: 69% Adjunct, who are unranked; ll% Instructors, 10% Associate Professors, 8% Assistant Professors, and 2% Professors.

Generally, most community colleges require the teaching staff to have at least a Master's degree in their area of specialization. Usually, most of these teachers have taught K-l2 before coming to the community college; therefore, most of them are experienced practitioners. The responses to educational requirements and teaching experience confirm these established practices. For instance, a Master's degree in English is the most common requirement(78%), followed by a Master's in related fields, such as reading, speech, and humanities (13%). Other educational requirements include a Master's in education with emphasis in English, a Bachelor's degree in English for those who only teach basic writing courses, and a Master's degree in Arts or Fine Arts (9%). Figure 4 (on page 21b) gives an overview of the requisite degrees for employment in English.

But does the traditional Master of Arts degree in English, with its emphasis on literature and rarely in composition theory, reflect adequate preparation for community college English teachers? English faculty of the l990s are concerned about their limitations, especially the difficulties they encounter in meeting the varying needs of our

Figure 3: Academic Rank of Those Who Teach Writing Courses

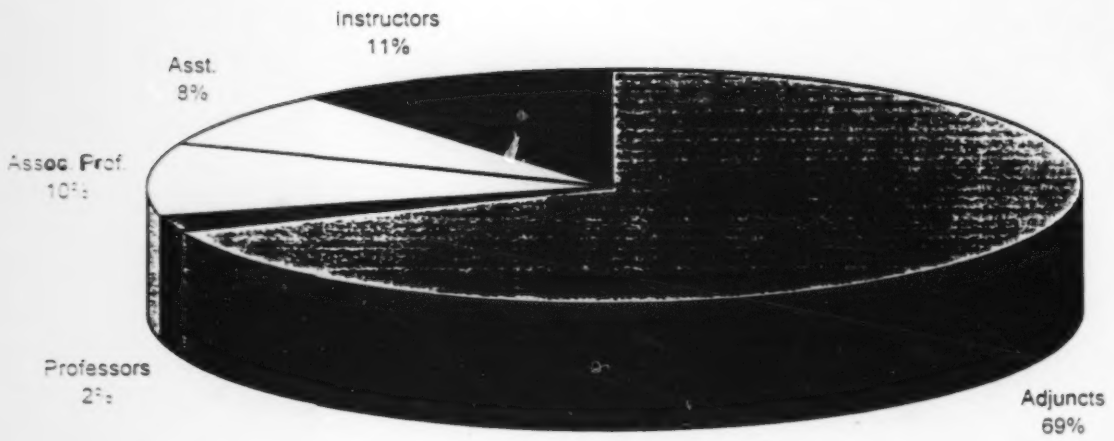
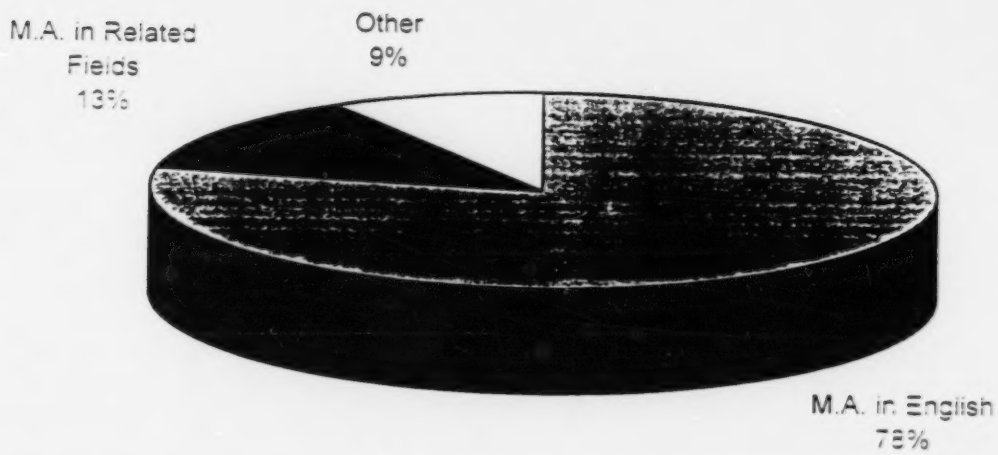


Figure 4: Educational Requirements

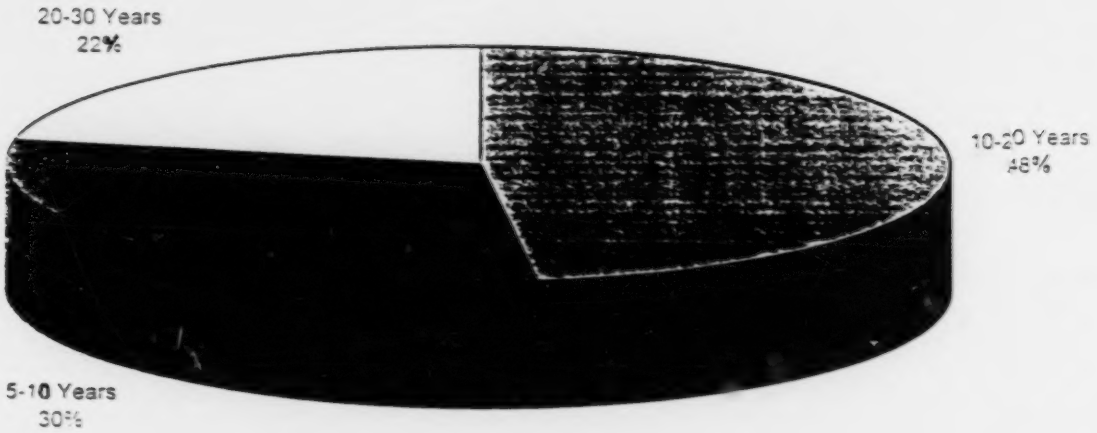


diverse student population. With renewed faculty development activities that are "directed toward empowering faculty within the classroom, curriculum, college, and profession," and not a preoccupation with the creation of "generic teachers"-- which is the current focus of most staff development activities -- we can create an "academic culture" that fosters effective, meaningful learning and teaching in our writing programs (Kroll 205).

The majority of community college teachers of writing are experienced practitioners. Raines's survey, for instance, indicates that most "respondents had an average of thirteen years teaching experience" and "45% of their faculty will be eligible to retire within l0 years ("Is There a Writing Program...?" 156). The issue of retirement eligibility is also supported by the Commission on the Future of Community Colleges. Its studies indicate that "40% of all two-year college faculty will retire before the year 2000"(qtd.in Kroll 196). A similar conclusion is given in the respondents' answer to teaching experience, age, and retirement eligibility within ten years (See Figure 5 on page 22a.).Additionally, the average age of faculty with the 40-60 years range is 6l%. They comprise faculty who have 10-30 years teaching experience. Thus, many of them (44%) will retire within ten years.

Several studies recommend"changes in the organizational development of the two-year college in order to improve English instruction "(Kroll 200). Some of the crucial issues entail teaching load and class size. They suggest "smaller teaching loads -- four courses instead of the standard five or six courses per term ---; smaller class sizes -- 20 to 25 students in each composition class rather than 30 or 35. . . . " (Kroll 200). In examining

Figure 5: Years of Teaching Experience



the survey's reponses, I observe that the majority of those who teach writing courses are assigned five courses (61%); 31% are assigned four courses.* (See Figure 6 on page 23a.).

From the surveyed colleges' responses, the average number of students in each composition courses is 27 in the transfer-level and 22 in the basic writing course. This current practice conflicts with the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) recommendations on teaching loads and class size:

> No more than 20 students should be permitted in any writing class. . . . Remedial or developmental sections should be limited to a maximum of 15 students. . . . No English faculty members should teach more than 60 writing students a term. In developmental writing classes, the maximum should be 45. (CCCC Commission on Professional Standards 4)

Raines reaffirms this position when she reiterates,

> Loads and total students numbers then do exceed the CCCC and NCTE guidelines for workloads for college English teachers which advise no more than twelve hours of teaching and no more than 60 writing students per term. ("Is There a Writing Program....?" 157)

Perhaps, this advise will be taken more seriously when we make concerted efforts to disband our notion of a "generic" community college instructor and create environments that foster and demonstrate creativity and flexibility in research-informed pedagogical practices.

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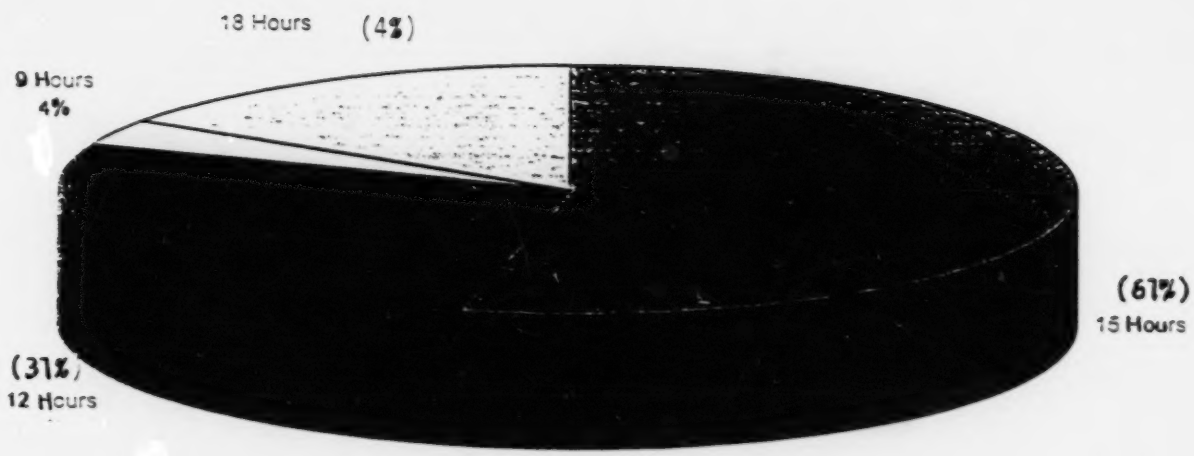
* *Because some departments that house the writing programs serve several disciplines, faculty may be assigned an interdisciplinary schedule.*

Figure 6: Average Teaching Load



Instructional Practices

How can we maximize our students' learning? Do our current instructional practices in our writing courses reflect the creation of an environment that motivates our students to improve their writing? Perhaps, one educator offers us a thought-provocative response when he advises us to develop an attitude that

> puts the student first, and the institution second. It [attitude] concentrates more on the former's needs than the latter's convenience, encourages diversity of individual opportunity rather than uniform prescription, and de-emphasizes time, space, and even course requirements in favor of competence and, where applicable, performance. (Clark 47)

This student-centered approach reverberates throughout the research of current composition theorists and researchers. But who are these students? How, then, have we demonstrated in our current classroom practices the importance of these students?Have we carved out our own little self-serving , convenient niches that thwart the progress of other faculty members who are committed to render quality service to our students? Our current student population is very diverse. It consists of

> more returning adult learners; more speakers of English as a second language; more first-generation college students who may not understand college methods and standards; more students who depend on mass media instead of books for their information and whose knowledge of written sentence structure, spelling, vocabulary, and effective organization of ideas is not the same as the students we taught twenty years ago. (Knodt 120)

To meet the needs of our students, we are challenged to examine and modify our current pedagogical practices in the writing courses.

The kinds of writing assigned in the composition courses reflect our current instructional practices. For instance, in the developmental writing courses, the dominant

type of writing assignments seem to be exploratory, those that value writing as a means of actively engaging students in their own learning. Also, in the transfer-level composition courses, the primary type of writing assignment is "transactional" or persuasive-informative discourse (See Table 2 on page 22a.)

The respondents' reflections are consistent with current composition theory that encourages us to offer a sequence of assignments which increase in difficulty from the more concrete and personal to the more abstract modes. Connors argues that "from the 1890s through today, personal writing assignments have remained central to the teaching of composition" (177-78). That is, we usually place "personal writing early in [our] sequence of assignments because [we] believe it to be easier for inexperienced writers, owing to the accessibility and perceived user-friendliness of students' own experience as a writing resource"(Foster 7). It is also commonly believed that there are developmental stages that students must attain if they are to write effective discourse. Linda Flower addresses this concern when she encourages us to help students "juggle complex cognitive constraints" or to "transform their private thoughts into public, reader-based expression" ("Writer-Based Prose....." 19). Thus, it makes sense to move from assignments that are cognitively less demanding to those that are more complex.

The methods we use in the teaching of writing also reflects our attitudes toward writing.Are these attitudes product-centered, process-centered, subject-centered, and/or eclectic? That is, in the product-centered, mode-driven writing courses, "instructors assume the role of 'gatekeepers' of textual standards"(Glasgow 102); lectures are

Table 2: Kinds of Writing by Number of Times Mentioned

	Number ...	
Kinds of Writing	Dev.	Transfer
Short Responses	7	3
Transactional	15	22
Personal	23	15
Creative	3	4
Other	4	3

dominant; multiple-draft revision is discouraged because of the preoccupation with form, structure, and surface features of the final product. However, in the process-centered writing course, emphasis is placed on students' actual writing in workshops, where they plan, draft, and rewrite their texts. That is, this type of instruction focuses on the examination of written discourse in various stages of completion. In a subject-centered writing course, focus is placed on the subject matter. For instance, the course may be thematically organized around writing about films, literature, or the rhetorical modes. This course may also emphasize linguistic forms whereby the "sequence of instruction begins with words and progresses through sentences and paragraphs . . . to whole essays" (Lindemann 242). In an eclectic course, however, the instructor integrates the best content from the three previously mentioned approaches. Becoming a student-centered course, it characterizes an amalgam of collaborative activities, such as peer review, peer tutoring, conferences, and small group work. It aims to assist "students to develop their voices or styles of their own, the kind of control of language . . . that will enable them to shape and control, rather than to be shaped and controlled by their environments" (qtd. in Lindemann 244). The survey's respondents generally use an eclectic, writing-based approach, although a few were quite product-centered (See Table 3 on page_26a.).

According to Table 3, the most frequently used instructional methods are in-class workshops (20), conferences (20), collaborative learning (18), in-class writing (17), peer tutoring (16), and computer-assisted instruction (15). The most infrequently used methods are examination, quizzes, and lectures. One respondent indicates that "a final examination is required and counts 50% of the course grade in Composition I. This is

Table 3: Instructional Methods by Number of Times Mentioned

	Number ...	
Instructional Methods	Used Often	Used Infreq.
In-class Workshops	20	0
Collaborative Learning	18	4
Lectures	13	9
In-class Writing	17	1
Individual Tutorials	12	8
Conferences	20	2
Peer Tutoring	16	5
Exam / Quizzes	12	11
In-class Reading	12	8
CAI	15	5
Other (Portfolios)	1	0

a departmental requirement."

As computers are added to classrooms and academic support centers, our instructional-learning delivery system in writing courses will markedly improve. For example, some computer-assisted -instruction advocates claim that "most writers note that computer-mediated classrooms promote greater access to information and resources; more collaborative, audience-directed writing; and a greater sense of entitlement in both writers and readers"(Reed 187). This computer-mediated environment enables students to use the technology to generate ideas, draft, revise, edit, and collaborate with each other and their instructor.

The number of respondents who use in-class writing is surprising. It is difficult to determine if these tasks are impromptu or continued writing tasks. The responses are surprising because research indicates that in-class impromptu writing is "formulaic, unresponsive to the nature of writing and destructive to the writing curriculum"(White," "An Apologia,"30). Black claims that "a single-sitting, impromptu essay exam neither tests the skills these students have been taught nor supports the connections between learning and writing"(9). Also, Peter Elbow argues that timed impromptu essays reflect "agreement about a faint, smudged, and distorted picture of the student's writing ability"(qtd. in Belanoff & Dickson xiii). Finally, NCTE "opposes the practice of claiming to measure a student's overall ability at writing by means of a single score on a single piece of writing produced at one sitting and vows to eliminate this practice"(NCTE Sense of the House Motion, No. 3. November 1992).

Others, like Anderson, insist that impromptu writing "serves little instructional value.

It is used because it serves the purposes of the institution (which then becomes reflected in our pedagogy): entrance exams, exit exams, tests of proficiency, tests of learned skills -- ways to measure writing improvement"(25). Sharing a similar view, James Britton, in his classic study **The Development of Writing Abilities,** argues against impromptu writing because it takes time to "incubate one's ideas" (29). James Britton explains,

> It takes time to incubate one's ideas. But often in school the assumption seems to be that, unless writing is done at once, initial ideas or information will be lost. This is in marked contrast to the view expressed by many mature writers and thinkers. (29).

Thus, impromptu writing seems to place constraints on students, does not elicit students' best performances, disallows incubation, and prevents the occurrence of any meaningful incubation (Anderson 35-36).

Most writing courses seem to share a common objective: to provide students with guided practice in composing so that they may become more effective writers at the end of the term than they were at the beginning. To attain that objective, we make pedagogical decisions based on what we know about how students learn to write. Our assumptions about the composing process are usually shaped by composition theories, research, and classroom practices which our experiences have validated as "workable."

As we plan what we intend to teach and how to go about it, we develop a syllabus. It provides general guidelines for writing curricula and teaching practices of those courses. The syllabus, generally developed by the faculty, offers broad outlines of the classroom activities, readings, and assignments. Thus, the syllabus has both an informative and pedagogical function.

In response to the question on **standard syllabus**, 61% of the respondents do not use a standard departmental syllabus. Only 26% use a departmentally mandated syllabus. Other respondents gave these qualifying statements:

1. "We use standard objectives but individual instructional approaches."
2. "We use district-wide course competencies."
3. "Departmental policies and procedures are used for passing the course."

At the end of the semester, we expect our students to be better writers than they were at the beginning of the term. But how do we make that determination? How do we accurately assess students' readiness, especially when they move from one level to the next in writing courses? Perhaps, the movement may entail completion of a basic writing course and the entrance into the first-level of a transfer composition course. Most course of study outlines provide entrance and exit competencies. Therefore, when students move from one level to the next, we try to ensure students' success in entering that course by using certain evaluative criteria. The majority of the survey's respondents (10) use their department's exit examination; seven use instructor-designed examinations; two use a standard test to determine students' readiness to move from one writing course to the next. Some qualifying comments on the assessment of students' movement from one course to another include:

1. "Departmental exit exams are administered in all basic writing courses."
2. "Instructor-designed exit exams are used in Composition I and II."
3. "Movement from a basic course to a transfer course is determined by the score on the CPT standard test."

4. "A grade of C or better is required to move from one writing course to the next."

5. "Departmental exit exams are voluntary. Instructors may determine grade from students' performance. Instructors determine the grades, not the score on an exam."

6. "We are moving toward departmental exit/entrance exams."

7. "Portfolio assessment is used to determine course movement."

Another area that impacts writing instruction is that type of service provided by the academic support centers. Academic supports include an amalgam of resources that acknowledge the various learning needs of students. Some of these resources include: mentoring, computer center, peer tutoring, learning achievement centers, counseling/ advising, writing-across-the curriculum, writing labs, and the reading labs. Most respondents indicate that the writing center (20), peer tutoring (2l), and the computer center (l8) are the common types of academic supports (See Table 4 on page 30a.)

The recurring instructional technique in these academic support activities is "collaborative learning." Composition research attributes many benefits to collaborative learning techniques. For example, Kenneth Bruffee argues that "collaborative learning provides a social context in which students can experience and practice the kinds of conversation valued by college teachers" ("Collaborative Learning....." 642). These kinds of conversations are included in mentoring programs, in peer tutoring, in the learning achievement centers, counseling sessions, writing labs, and reading labs.

Because our colleges have open admissions policy, the range of students' abilities vary.

Table 4: Types of Academic Support by Number of Times Mentioned

Types of Academic Support	Number
Mentoring Program	7
Computer Center	18
Peer Tutoring	21
Learning Achievement Center	13
Counselor / Advisor	12
Writing-Across-the-Curriculum	8
Writing Lab	20
Reading Lab	6

Some students may be "basic writers" with reading and writing abilities far below others. In contrast, other students may be strong writers with minimal reading and writing weaknesses. One method of ensuring these students' success is to assess all incoming students. Dependent on the college, varying types of placement devices -- standard tests, diagnostic exercises, writing samples, high school grades -- may be used.

While writing placement is a key factor in the failure or success of any writing program, placement has recently become increasingly important as our student population becomes more diverse. Although we have struggled for years to design a fair, non-traditional placement process, we realize that we have not changed much at all. While some community colleges use an untraditional examination, a single-sample impromptu essay (5), it is still a test because it attempts to measure students' writing ability by the evaluation of only one product. As Table 5 on page 31a shows, the majority of the respondents, however, use a standard test score to place students in their writing courses.

Our placement procedure seems to ignore our writing programs' purposes that emphasize collaborative learning, critical thinking, and multiple drafts based on peer, teacher, and other academic support feedback. If indeed we truly believe that "the instructor acts as a guide and evaluator, responding to students' work at each stage, commending, advising, and encouraging, during the process, rather than merely criticizing the finished product" (Lauer 64), then why are we acting as gatekeepers for a product-oriented examination, whether it is an impromptu essay or a standardized test? Why aren't we practicing in placement what we so ardently advocate in our teaching

Table 5: Placement in Writing Courses by Number of Times Mentioned

Placement Devices	Number
High School Grades	2
Grade on Essay Placement	5
ACT / SAT Score	7
Standardized Test	18
Instructor-designed Diagnostic	7
Other	6

practices?

Some of us use standardized tests for placing students in our writing courses. Although the majority of the respondents (18) who use them indicate that instructor-designed diagnostics are also used to confirm or change placement, we are still practicing in placement what we advocate in our teaching practices. The research in composition, as reverberated by NCTE and CCCC, overwhelmingly shows that standardized tests

> misrepresent . . . the skills and abilities of students. . . . Furthermore, standardized tests tend to focus on readily accessed features of the language -- on grammatical correctness and stylistic choices-- and on error, on what is wrong rather than on appropriate rhetorical choices that have been made. Consequently, the outcome of the assessment is negative: students are used to demonstrate what they do 'wrong' with language rather than what they do well. . . . The means used to test students' writing ability shapes what they, too, consider writing to be. . . . If students are asked to select -- in a multiple choice format -- the best grammatical and stylistic choices, they will conclude that good writing is 'correct' writing. They will see writing erroneously as the avoidance of error; they will think that grammar and style exist apart from overall purpose and discourse design. (CCCC Committee on Assessment 433)

What is taught in a writing course helps to define the college's writing program. Developing the abilities to organize and develop ideas, to think critically and logically, to use grammar that does not inhibit comprehension, for example, entails a gradual process. Thus, the degree of emphasis on textual features and curricular activities determines the focus and the design of the writing program. Once that text becomes the content or focus of the writing program or course, we can arrange a developmental sequence of assignments, designed to practice the textual skills we have previously identified.

Therefore, if we judge products for placement, we should observe, guide, and evaluate the process that produced them. The essential point is that our writing placement should

provide incoming students with a realistic introduction to our colleges' writing programs.

When respondents were asked about curricular activities and influential textual features in their writing courses, their responses suggest a writing-based curriculum that often utilizes an eclectic approach (See Table 6 on page 33a.). For example, much emphasis is placed on these textual features: unity/coherence (20), development (22), logic (21), organization (17), grammar (15), and audience awareness (13). For curricular activities, emphasis is placed on: thesis (23), revision (23), development (20), organization (20), prewriting (16), in-class writing (16), and peer response (12).

Conclusion

In this section, I have attempted to analyze the surveyed colleges' responses to their writing programs' purposes, administration, and instructional practices. In the analysis, I have tried to compare their responses to the current composition theories' suggestions about the teaching of writing. As the tables and graphs show, some of the colleges' practices seem to be informed by the current composition research and theory; on the other hand, others do not. Thus, an ongoing re-examination of our writing programs is essential in order to ensure effective teaching and meaningful learning.

Table 6: Teaching Emphases in Writing Courses by Number of Times Mentioned

Emphases	Number
Textual Features:	
*Unity / Coherence	20
*Development	22
*Logic	21
*Organization	17
*Grammar	15
*Audience	13
Curr. Activities:	
*Thesis	23
*Development	20
*Revision	23
*Organization	20
*Prewriting	16
*In-class Writing	16
*Peer Response	12

CHAPTER IV: SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

Characteristics of Exemplary Writing Programs

Connolly and Vilardi, authors of MLA's reference, New Methods in College Writing Programs, claim that current instructional practices in writing are "now generally informed by the rich theory and research of the past quarter century"(1). Therefore, we may assume that community colleges' writing programs are also experiencing some meaningful curricular changes because research-based theory informs the programs' purpose, administration, and pedagogical practices. The survey's responses, in most cases, "suggest how writing programs are changing in response to the recent intensive analysis of the theory and practice of writing instruction" (Connolly & Vilardi 1).

Using MLA's suggested criteria for "innovative" writing programs, I have given a graphic representation of exemplary community college writing programs (See Table 7 on page 51a.). The criteria include:

1. Purpose of writing programs
2. Class size
3. Teaching Load
4. Instructional Method
5. Academic supports
6. Staffing of writing programs
7. Syllabus: Standard vs. Open
8. Instructor's Qualifications

No conclusive statement may be extrapolated from Table 7. Whatever the programs' purposes, administration, and instructional practices, community college faculty who teach writing are committed to their students' successes. Therefore, Table 7 reflects exemplary writing programs because of the successes these colleges have reported. The theories that inform these writing programs have paved the way for further reflections, for more deliberations, and for increased re-examination of our instructional practices that propel us to develop our own theoretical stances for our own college's constituents.

Edward White summarizes our efforts very well when he states that the instructional practices, administration, and purposes "of the freshman writing course [and the developmental writing courses] should be determined by the institution, and the standards should be reasonably consistent from section to section"(Assigning, Responding, and Evaluating 48).

Table 7: Exemplary Writing Programs

Respondents*	Ft/Pt Staffing %	Class Size	Teaching Load: Hours	Placement (Initial)	Instructional Method	Academic Supports	Syllabus	Purpose of Writing Prog.	Qualifications (English)
Aaron	56/44	20/25	15	Asset	Process	Peer Tutoring	Open	Service	MA
Adams	50/48	27	12	Asset	Process	Peer Tutoring	Standard	Service	MA
Burwell	27/72	20/25	15	Asset	Process	Peer Tutoring	Open	Self-Development	MA
Bunting	50/50	25	12	CPT	Process	Peer Tutoring	Open	Self-Development	MA
Donnelly	35/65	20/25	15	Asset	Process	Writing Center	Open	Self-Development	MA
Dodds	40/60	23/25	12	Compass	Process	Writing Center	Open	Self-Development	MA
Good	36/61	12/28	12	Essay	Process	Peer Tutoring	Standard	Self-Development	MA
Hanks	40/60	24	15	Asset	Process	Peer Tutoring	Open	Self-Development	MA+ 24 hrs.
Hanson	30/65	28/35	15	Essay	Process	Peer Tutoring	Open	Self-Development	Ph.D.
Hardway	36/55	25/28	15	Asset	Process	Writing Center	Standard	Self-Development	MA
Hughes	8/65	27/30	15	Asset	Process	Writing Center	Standard	Self-Development	MA
Hatcher	20/80	22	15	Asset	Process	Peer Tutoring	Open	Service	MA
Janss	30/70	30	15	Asset	Process	Peer Tutoring	Standard	Service	MA
Launt	23/80	25	15	CPT	Process	Peer Tutoring	Standard	Self-Development	MA
Lamb	60/38	22/24	12	Asset	Process	Writing Center	Open	Self-Development	MA
Madden	60/40	20/25	12	Essay	Process	Peer Tutoring	Open	Self-Development	Ph.D.
Labriola	60/40	22	15	Asset	Process	Peer Tutoring	Standard	Service	MA
Powell	60/40	18/24	12	TSWE	Process	Peer Tutoring	Open	Service	MA
Rudrow	64/36	16/22	15	Accuplacer	Process	Writing Center	Open	Self-Development	MA
Russell	60/40	20/25	15	Asset	Process	Peer Tutoring	Open	Self-Development	MA
Stamm	22/78	25/27	20	Compass	Process	Writing Center	Standard	Self-Development	MA
Scanlon	33/66	20/28	15	Essay	Process	Peer Tutoring	Open	Self-Development	MA
Schwertley	35/65	20/25	15	Essay	Process	Peer Tutoring	Open	Self-Development	MA

*College represents respondent's last name

St. Louis Community College
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FAX 314/644-9752

August 26, 1996

Dear Colleague,

You are invited to participate in my sabbatical research project designed to study two-year community colleges' writing instruction in developmental and transfer-level composition courses.

Since the 1965 NCTE study on two-year colleges' writing program (only includes developmental and transfer-level composition courses), no comprehensive study has been conducted. Therefore, this survey attempts to gather, analyze, and share information on current curricular practices in developmental and transfer-level composition courses of selected community colleges. The respondents are English department chairs and writing directors/coordinators who are asked to provide their estimation of the current principles and practices that govern writing instruction in their colleges.

Specifically, the survey attempts to compile base-line data on your college's writing program's purposes, administration/staffing, and instructional practices. From the survey's results, recommendations for possible adaptation and implementation of these successful writing programs in two-year community college curriculum will be shared with my colleagues.

Because a high response rate is crucial to the validity of the survey's results, please provide as much information as you can. You will be notified of your inclusion in the final document and sent a letter of appreciation for your professional portfolio.

Please return the completed survey to me by September 13, 1996, in the enclosed return envelope. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Pearl Saunders, Ph.D.
English Department

Enclosures:2

St. Louis Community College is an equal opportunity affirmative action institution

WRITING INSTRUCTION AT SELECTED TWO-YEAR COMMUNITY COLLEGES

I. *PURPOSES OF WRITING PROGRAM[includes only developmental and transfer-level composition courses]*

1. **What are the primary *purposes* of your writing program?(Rank each purpose using 1-3, one being the most important.)**

__ **Provides students with general education requirements**
__ **Helps students to use writing for lifelong learning**
__ **Prepares students for other college courses**
__ **Prepares students for transfer to senior colleges**
__ **Prepares students for employment**
__ **Develops students' basic writing skills**
__ **Other (Please explain.)**_____

II. ADMINISTRATION/STAFFING OF WRITING PROGRAM [includes only developmental and transfer-level composition courses]

2. **How is your writing program *staffed?***

__ **Full-time faculty** _____%
__ **Part-time faculty** _____%
__ **Student tutors** _____%
__ **Administrators/Directors** _____%
__ **Paraprofessionals(non-degreed)** _____%
__ **Other (Please specify.)** _____%

_____

3. **What's the average *course load* per term for full-time faculty who teach developmental and transfer-level composition courses?**

_____ **credit hours**

4. **What are the *educational requirements* for faculty who teach developmental and transfer-level composition courses?**

__ **Ph.D. in English (Literature, Rhetoric, Linguistics)**
__ **M.A. in English**
__ **M.A. in related field**
__ **Other (Please specify.)**_____

5. What's the average number of *years of experience* of all faculty who teach developmental and transfer-level composition courses?

__ 0-5 years
__ 5-10 years
__ 10-20 years
__ 20-30 years
__ 30+ years

6. Who *directs your writing program(includes only developmental and transfer-level composition courses)*?

__ English Department Chair
__ Program Director/Coordinator
__ Other (Please specify.):_____

7. What's the *average age* of all faculty who teach developmental and composition courses?

__ under 25 years
__ 20-40 years
__ 40-60 years
__ over 60 years

8. What's the *average number of students* per writing course?

Courses	*Number of Students*
__ Transfer-level courses	_____
__ Developmental Writing courses	_____

9. Please identify the number of persons at each *academic rank* who provide writing instruction in developmental and transfer-level composition courses?

Academic Rank	*Number*
Adjuncts	_____
Asst. Professors	_____
Assoc. Professors	_____
Professors	_____
Other (Please explain.)	_____

_____

10. What *percentage of full-time faculty* who teach developmental and transfer-level composition courses will be *eligible to retire* within 10 years?

_____%

III. WRITING INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

11. **What *kinds of writing* are included in the developmental composition courses?** (Check all appropriate responses.)

____ **Abbreviated (Short responses, multiple choice, True/False)**
____ **Persuasive/Informative [proving a thesis]**
____ **Personal/Expressive [personal experience]**
____ **Creative [writing poems, plays, stories, etc.]**
____ **Other [Please explain.]**_____

12. What *kinds of writing* are included in the transfer-level composition courses?(Check all appropriate responses.)

____ Abbreviated [Short responses, multiple choice, True/False)
____ Persuasive/Informative[Proving a thesis]
____ Personal/Expressive [personal experience]
____ Creative[Writing poems, plays, stories)
____ Other [Please specify.]_____

13. **How frequently are these *curricular activities* performed in the developmental and transfer-level composition courses?Check all appropriate responses.**

		Not Used	*Rarely Used*	*Occasionally Used*	*Used Often*
a.	**Discussing Thesis**	___	___	___	___
b.	**Revising Papers**	___	___	___	___
c.	**Discussing Development**	___	___	___	___
d.	**Discussing Organization**	___	___	___	___
e.	**Discussing Grammar**	___	___	___	___
f.	**Doing Prewriting**	___	___	___	___
g.	**Doing in-class writing**	___	___	___	___
h.	**Doing peer-evaluation**	___	___	___	___
I.	**Other (Specify.)**	_____			

14. Which *instructional methods* are *often(O)* or *infrequently(I)* used in the developmental and transfer-level composition courses?

___ In-class workshops
___ Collaborative Learning
___ Lectures
___ In-class Writing
___ Individual Tutorials
___ Conferences
___ Peer Tutoring
___ Examinations/Quizzes
___ In-class Reading
___ Computer-Assisted Instruction
___ Other[Please specify.]_____

15. What *types of writing courses* do you offer?

___ Composition I
___ Composition II
___ Basic Developmental Writing
___ Specialized Writing
__ Technical/Report Writing
__ Creative Writing
__ Desktop Publishing
__ Other [Please explain.]_____

16. Do writing instructors rely on a *standard syllabus(includes a calendar of assignments, departmental policies and procedures)* to structure their teaching?

___ Yes ___ No ___ Other[Please explain]_____

17. Does the English Department offer an *associate degree* in English / Writing or an option within a degree?

___ Yes ___ No ___ Other[Please explain.]_____

18. What *basic course requirements* are used to determine students' movement from one writing course to another?[Check the appropriate responses.]

___ Departmental Exit Exam
___ Instructor-designed Exit Exam
___ Standardized Test Name:_____

19. What types of *academic supports* are available for students enrolled in the developmental and transfer-level composition courses? [Check the appropriate responses.]

___ Mentoring Program
___ Writing Center
___ Reading Lab
___ Learning Achievement Center
___ Computer Center
___ Peer Tutoring
___ Counselor/Advisement Sessions
___ Writing Across the Curriculum
___ Other [Please explain.] _____

20. How are students *placed* in the developmental and transfer-level composition courses? [Check all appropriate responses.]

___ High School grades
___ Grade on essay placement test
___ ACT/SAT score
___ Standardized test score Name of Test:_____
___ Instructor-designed diagnostic test
___ Other [Please specify.] _____

21. Based on your department's policies, which of the following textual features influence the *grading* of student's writing in the developmental and transfer-level composition courses? [Check all appropriate responses.]

		Very much	*Somewhat*	*No Influence*
___	Organization	___	___	___
___	Coherence/Unity	___	___	___
___	Development	___	___	___
___	Grammatical/ mechanical errors that inhibit comprehension	___	___	___
___	Originality	___	___	___
___	Quality of Ideas	___	___	___
___	Logic	___	___	___
___	Audience awareness	___	___	___

1. Please use this space to comment on any of the issues raised by the questionnaire.

2.Please print your name, position, and institution.

SURVEY'S REMINDER

CC's Writing Program Survey 9/10/96

Dear Colleague: A few weeks ago I mailed you a questionnaire concerning your writing program's purposes, administration, and instructional practices. If you have already returned the questionnaire, "thank you." Your opinions will help us serve our students better.

If you have not had a chance to do so, please take a few minutes to complete and return the questionnaire in the postage-paid envelope supplied. Your response is important to us, and we appreciate your cooperation.

Sincerely,
Pearl Saunders, Ph.D. / English Department
SLCC - Forest Park

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A LIST OF PARTICIPATING COMMUNITY COLLEGES

1. Aaron, Bruce
Des Moines Area Community College
2006 South Ankeny Blvd.
Ankeny, IA 50021

2. Adam, Marianne
Oakland Community College
2480 Opdyke Rd.
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48303

3. Burwell, Hope
Kirkwood Community College
6301 Kirkwood Blvd.
Cedar Rapids, IA 52406

4. Bunting, Ellie
Edison Community College
8099 College Parkway, SW
Fort Meyers, FL 33906

5. Donnelly, Mary Ruth
Belleville Area College
2500 Carlyle Rd.
Belleville, IL 62221

6. Dodds, Jack
William Rainey Harper College
1200 W Algonquin Rd.
Palatine, IL 60067

7. Good, Elaine M.
Nassau Community College
Garden City, NY 11530

8. Hanks, Margaret
Glendale Community College
6000 West Olive Av.
Glendale, AZ 85302

9. Hanson, Sandra S.
La Guardia Community College
31-10 Thomson Av.
Long Island City, NY 11101

10. Hardway, John
Phoenix College
1202 West Thomas Rd.
Phoenix, AZ 85013

11. Hatcher, Ruth A.
Washtenaw Community College
4800 East Huron River Dr.
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

12. Hughes, Margaret D.
Butte College
3536 Butte Campus Dr.
Oroville, CA 95965

13. Janss, Jack
Citrus Community College
1000 West Foothill Blvd.
Glendora, CA 91740

14. Lamb, Bill
Johnson County Community College
12345 College at Quivira
Overland Park, KS 66210

15. Launt, Jonathan
Central Piedmont Community College
P.O. Box 35009
Charlotte, NC 28235

16. Labriola, J.
Sinclair Community College
444 West Third Street
Dayton, OH 45402

17. Madden. Frank
SUNY Westchester Community College
75 Grasslands Rd.
Valhalla, NY 10595

18. Powell, Jack Lee
Lane Community College
4000 East 30th Avenue
Eugene, OR 97405

19. Rudrow, Howard
Brookdale Community College
765 Newman Springs Rd.
Lincroft, NJ 07738

20. Russell, Alexander
Community College of Philadelphia
1700 Spring Garden St.
Philadelphia. PA 19130

21. Scanlon, Jack
Triton Community College
2000 Fifth Avenue
River Grove, IL 60171

22. Schwertley, Marc
Malcolm X College
1900 West Van Buren Dr.
Chicago. IL 60612

23. Stamm, Beckey
Columbus State Community College
550 East Spring Street
Columbus, OH 43215

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